

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

**August 17, 2004
Marathon Garden Club**

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present

Jack Curlett	Nancy Klingener
Todd Firm	Duncan Mathewson
Mitch Gale	Martin Moe
Richard Grathwohl	Ken Nedimyer
Debra Harrison	Bruce Popham
David Hawtof	Deborah Shaw
Don Kincaid	Brad Simonds
Mark Klingbeil	

Alternates Present

Jerry Lorenz
Jody Thomas

Call to Order

Acting Chair Bruce Popham called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

Approval of Minutes/Adoption of Agenda

The Minutes of the June 15, 2004 meeting were approved as presented. The agenda was modified and adopted as modified.

Introductions

Superintendent Causey welcomed new Upper Keys Regional Manager LCDR Stephen Beckwith. He introduced guests from NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring Joe Schittone and Heidi Schuttenberg, and welcomed Joanne Delaney, Sanctuary Research Interpreter, back to the Keys. Acting Chair Popham introduced Ralph Boragine, the new Executive Director for Monroe County Commercial Fishermen.

New Ballyhoo Hair-Hooking Permits – Joanne Delaney (FKNMS)

Ms. Delaney gave the background to the new, experimental permit system that will be taking effect for Conch, Alligator and Davis Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs) from October. She said that permit application forms can be downloaded from the Sanctuary website and need to be submitted between September 1st and October 15th. Discussion concerned the process involved in adopting the new permit to allow qualified fishermen to cast hair-hooks for baitfish in SPAs. Capt. Steve Leopold of the Islamorada Charter Boat Association clarified a number of points for Council members.

Public Comment

Charles Mitchell introduced himself as a citizen of the Florida Keys for 38 years, primarily engaged in treasure hunting for shipwrecks. He noted a problem between the Historic Shipwreck Policy Council and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, concerning the permitting system for exploring sites located during magnetic surveys. Anomalies may not be excavated in seagrass meadows without a permit. He made the observation that seagrass regrows more quickly than is generally perceived and described a method for restoring excavated sites rapidly. He requested that his comments be put on the record as an official complaint and noted that the maritime heritage in the Florida Keys is continuously deteriorating. Discussion concerned methods for restoring excavation sites with seagrass.

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Report – John Hunt (FWRI)

Mr. Hunt said that the Marine Life Fishery will be on the Commission agenda in St. Petersburg in September, and again on December 3, 2004 in the Florida Keys. Permit are on the agenda also and commissioners are thinking about a two permit bag limit per boat. He gave an update on the EPA-funded lobster tagging project in Western Sambo covering over 2 square kilometers.

Sanctuary Superintendent's Report – Billy Causey (FKNMS)

Mr. Causey said that he attended the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium with Kacky Andrews, Harold Hudson, Heidi Schuttenberg and Joe Schittone in Okinawa. The next meeting, following a competitive bidding process spearheaded by Dick Dodge of NOVA University, will be held in four years in Ft. Lauderdale. He presented the attached report as well as Captain Luher's Sanctuary Enforcement Report. Many of the officers have been detailed to the Port Charlotte area to assist in hurricane recovery. Discussion concerned the situation at Fort Jefferson after the eye of Hurricane Charley passed over it.

Farewell to Elsie Weber

Acting Chair Popham joined Mr. Causey and Kacky Andrews in saying goodbye to Elsie Weber who has provided support services for the SAC over a number of years. She is moving to North Carolina.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection Report – Kacky Andrews (FDEP)

Ms. Andrews reported on the grim situation in parts of Florida following Hurricane Charley. She announced the upcoming presentation of the Annual Report from the Sanctuary to the Governor and Cabinet and the joint meeting between the US Coral Reef Task Force and the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force in South Beach in September. She gave updates on the mooring buoy program, damage assessment and education and outreach. The Sanctuary has now assumed responsibility for volunteer programs from The Nature Conservancy.

Anne McCarthy reported on the Navy dredging project which is at 28% completion. There are no reported incidents of damage to turtles.

Discussion about Water Access in Monroe County - Bruce Popham (Marathon Boatyard)

Mr. Popham raised concerns in Monroe County over significant changes to waterfront properties, specifically the loss of marinas capable of handling large vessels. Discussion concerned the changing character of the historic waterfront from the 8th most valuable fishery in the country to development of private condominiums. A need was identified for a marine management plan, starting at the county and municipalities level by identifying the relevant properties.

Ms. Harrison moved that the Sanctuary Advisory Council request Sanctuary managers to convene a public workshop, to include local governments and the extension services, to address the loss of commercial fishing hubs and water access for the boating industry. The committee will be chaired by Council Member Bruce Popham. The motion was seconded by Ken Nedimyer and passed unanimously upon roll call vote.

Nearshore Hardbottom Characterizations from North Collier County - Matthew Lybolt (Coastal Planning & Engineering, Inc.)

Mr. Lybolt gave a PowerPoint presentation on “research-grade” surveys being conducted by the private sector in shallow waters of the Florida coastline. One survey in particular detailed the shift in size distribution towards large colonies of stony corals, possibly due to failed recruitment from a beach renourishment project that utilized fine, powdery sand. Discussion concerned survey methods, turbidity and species identification.

Coral Recruitment in the Florida Keys – Dr. Alina Szmant (University of North Carolina at Wilmington)

Dr. Szmant gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the scale and scope of problems facing coral recruits, from storms to settlement competition. She detailed the major research objectives which need to be met to try to restore corals, including life history experiments, which have traditionally been underfunded. Discussion concerned the role of crustose coralline algae and *Diadema* in successful recruitment for a number of species. Dr. Szmant described experiments she and colleagues are conducting to culture coral larvae.

Overview of Strategies to Increase Protected Area Resilience in the Face of Climate Change – Dr. Lara Hansen (WWF)

Dr. Hansen gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the connections between increased CO₂ in the atmosphere and rising temperatures and the implications of those changes for Florida’s marine ecosystems. She noted the importance of building resilience and resistance into management areas. Resistance is the ability to withstand climate change, resilience is the ability to recover from climate change. She said that a 2 degree Celsius increase will lead to population extirpation, 4 degrees leave no options for management, and a 6 degree increase is dire. Discussion concerned using natural systems and not technology as solutions to climate change problems, and the ongoing effects of the melting of Alaskan glaciers.

Public Comment

Mr. Beau Williams described a method for regrowing *Halodule* beds using sediment tubes on top of the rock that reduces recovery time from five years to one year.

H.T. Pontin said that the problem is that nobody is willing to change anything. Nobody's willing to give up their car or their boats. He recommended going back to sail and horses to solve the problem of so many cars in the country. He asked for a copy of the treaty that extends the authority of the State of Florida beyond Long Key.

Testing Climate Change Conservation Strategies in Western Samoa – Eric Mielbrecht (Emerald Coast Environmental Consulting)

Mr. Mielbrecht gave a PowerPoint presentation on a World Wildlife Fund project to assist resource managers in American Samoa determine the impacts of climate change on coral reefs, and to determine which corals are more resilient in adapting to changing physical parameters. He said that there is little genetic connectivity between Samoa and other reefs in the Pacific.

Status Report from the Permit Working Group – Richard Grathwohl

Mr. Grathwohl reported that the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission position for the State of Florida is two fish per boat per day. Islamorada flats guides still want one fish per boat per day. The Working Group recommendation is two fish per boat per day for all of the State waters outside the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and one fish per boat per day within the Sanctuary. Capt. Leopold clarified that Islamorada Charter Boat Association would like to see one fish per boat per day with a stamp. Discussion concerned which groups would be impacted by this recommendation, and it was determined that only recreational fishermen targeting permit on wrecks would be affected by the recommendation. Mr. Grathwohl moved that the Sanctuary Advisory Council recommend to Sanctuary managers to ask FWC commissioners to follow staff recommendations on a two fish limit and to have a one fish per boat per day bag limit for Permit be imposed in waters of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. He asked that the State look into an endorsement on an issuance of a stamp on the Saltwater License for Permit. Seconded by Mr. Curlett, the motion was passed unanimously upon roll call vote.

Adjourn